

(Breakthrough, September 1983)

## HYPERMNESIA EXPERIMENT

*by Devon Edrington*

*Professional Member*

- Psychology 100, Spring Quarter 1981, Tacoma Community College, Tacoma, Washington.
- 24 students in the experimental group; 24 students in the control group.
- Students in the experimental group had no access to the texts or tapes.
- Tapes used: Monroe Institute of Applied Sciences made especially for Devon Edrington.
- Teacher of class: Richard W. Giroux
- Experiment conducted by Richard Giroux and Devon Edrington.

TEST #	EXPERIMENTAL MEAN (tape)	CONTROL MEAN (no tape)	EXPERIMENTAL STAND. DEV.	CONTROL STAND. DEV.	T TEST	SIGNIFICANT LEVEL @ .05
1	79.44	73.07	14.45	14.43	1.5564	not sig.
2	76.71	65.92	12.37	15.11	2.9207	> .05 *
3	80.38	70.84	12.26	12.53	2.7732	> .05 *
4	83.84	73.92	9.96	11.99	3.1809	> .05 *
5	72.00	58.91	14.62	14.68	3.0925	> .05 *
6	66.64	54.88	17.92	14.28	2.5655	> .05 *
All 6.	76.56	66.37	14.68	15.46	5.916	> .05 **

- \* Test 2      significant level above .01.
- \* Test 3      significant level above .02.
- \* Test 4      significant level above .01.
- \* Test 5      significant level above .01.
- \* Test 6      significant level above .02.

\*\* Overall significant level far above .001.

The essential features of the experiment are: Students in both the experimental and control groups heard the same lectures, read the same books, took the same tests, and, were placed into the groups on the basis of the last digit of their social security numbers to ensure randomness. Students in the experimental group were required to listen to each tape twice. The cognitive material to be learned was mixed with Bob's master tape, and no student had access to the scripts. Of course, the students in the control group were not allowed to listen to any tape. The cognitive material consisted of sentences which extended to a maximum of four seconds reading time. They were recorded by the teacher of the class so that the voice would

be familiar to the students. The cognitive material consisted of definitions of terms peculiar to the discipline of psychology and fundamental concepts in learning theory, personality theory, etc.

Of course we are all aware that an experiment of this sort can yield misleading results due to the fact that the experimental group is given salient features of the course, whereas members of the control group are left to their own devices to ferret out the salient features. I anticipated that by insisting that the teacher provide to the full class (consisting of experimental and control groups) during lectures the same statements that were made on the tapes. Of course in the lectures these statements were not identified as salient features, they were merely mixed in (in an appropriate, non-obtrusive way) with the narrative.

Combining all six tests, the experimental group scored 10.19 percent higher than the control group, which, by most grading standards, translates into at least one letter grade higher.

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